Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society

N E W S L E T T E R April 1988

Calendar for Spring

April 28 - Historic Garden Week - Suffolk Tour

May 1 - Annual Historical Society Business Meeting - 2:30
Exhibit Opening - 3:00

May 21 - Suffolk Nansemond Historical Society private tour of Smithfield homes

May 30 - American Legion Annual Memorial Day Observance 11:00 A.M. - Cedar Hill Cemetery Entrance

* * * * * * * *

Business Meeting Exhibit Opening

On Sunday, May 1st, we will hold our annual business meeting on the ground floor of Riddick's Folly at 2:30 P.M. At 3:00 we will open our exhibit "The Law - Two Hundred Years of the People Who Have Influenced Suffolk and Nansemond County." This is an interesting exhibit first shown last May in observance of the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution. Marion Watson, assisted by Lucy Garnett, created the exhibit and wrote the related booklet. (See our publication list on page 4.) Refreshments will be served.

* * * * * * * *

Day Trip

We are pleased to announce that our group will be taking another excursion to an interesting spot nearby - (previously, you'll recall, we've visited Murfreesboro and Edenton in North Carolina.) On Saturday, May 21st, we will visit homes in Smithfield, Virginia. This is a private tour planned just for our group. We will visit 18th and 19th century houses, and one early 20th century house. We will have quick "walk throughs" of some other homes as well. Mrs. Parker Council, who has organized the tour for us, says that these are the Smithfield houses you've always wanted to see; so take advantage of this opportunity . Bring a friend as well. The tour and a picnic lunch on the garden of one of the homes will cost $10.00, $13.00 for non-members.

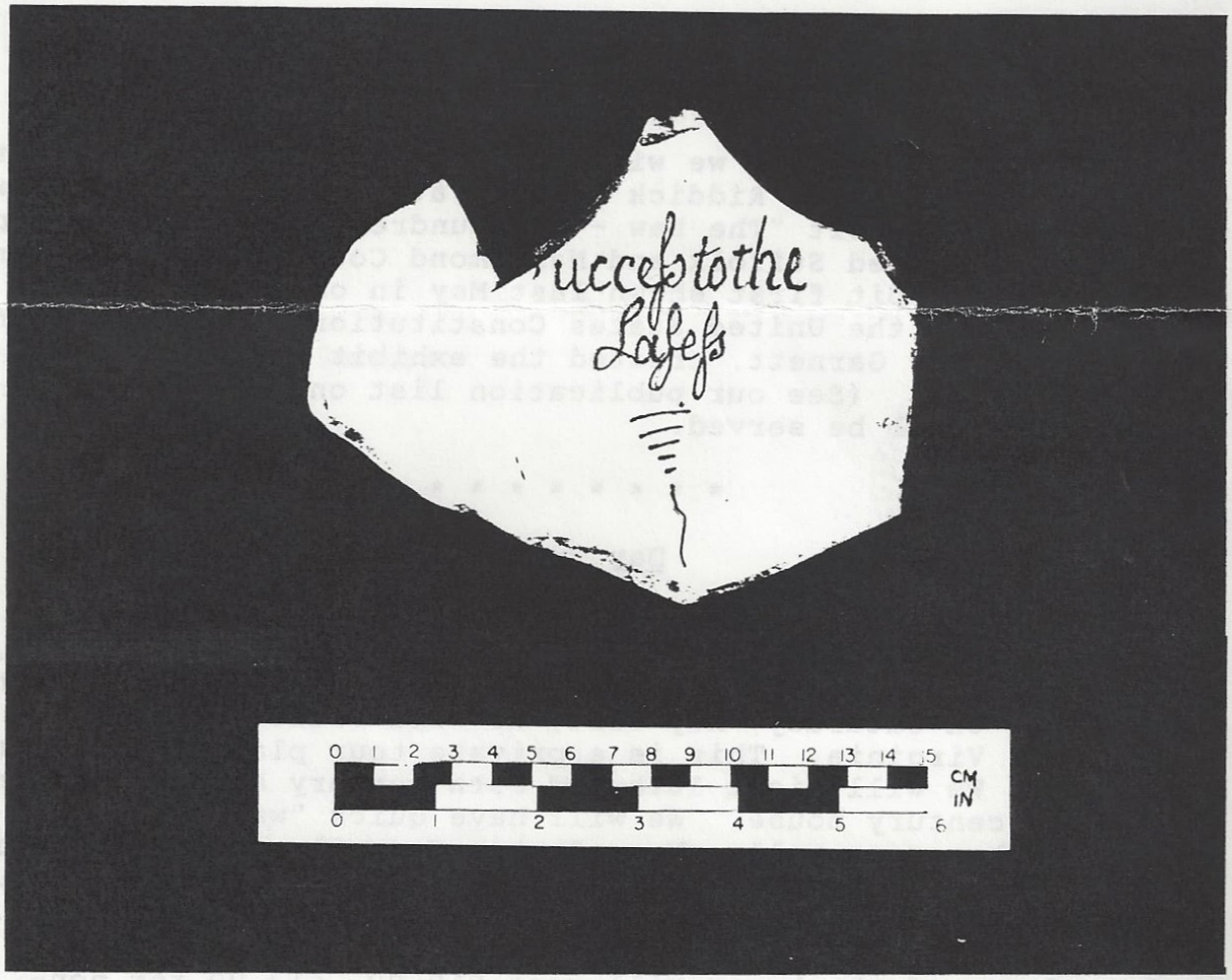
We will leave from the old Safeway parking lot at 9:30. We do not plan to use a bus but as several of us have station wagons we can provide for those who wish a ride. For an additional fee

you might like to stay for a Virginia Symphony performance in the early evening on the lawn of the beautiful old Windsor Castle (whcih we'll visit earlier in the day). Reservations for the tour and picnic lunch should be made no later than Wednesday, May 18th. To make reservations please call 934-1313 (Law offices of Moore & Saunders) or 934-1390 (Riddick's Folly) during business hours.

* * * * * * * *

Local members and guests were privileged to hear Mr. Christopher Calkins, historian at the Petersburg National Battlefield, speak on Monday, April 18, at Riddick's Folly. His topic was "Civilian Life in Petersburg During the Civil War." Mr. Calkins presented an excellent program and we hope that this will have been the first of many visits by him to our group.

* * * * * * * *



Detail of Delft punch bowl found at the dig - "Success to the Lasess" (?)

Woodward-Jones Dig

The dig goes on! For those of you who have joined only

recently, the Historical Society agreed to do the bookkeeping for archeological work at the site of a 1716 house near Driver in old Nansemond County. The bookkeeping has been assumed by Preservation of Historic Suffolk, Inc.

When the dig was begun you were told that the money was in hand and, at that point, we believed it to be. When the stock market fell in October so did five thousand dollars we were counting on. We would like to help to complete the dig. At our May 1st business meeting we would like to vote on whether to donate five hundred dollars from the Society. Individual donations are welcomed and tax deductable through Preservation of Historic Suffolk, Inc. These artifacts will be on permanent exhibit here in Suffolk; they will be studied, interpreted, and presented for display in such a manner as to tell how an average Virginia planter lived in 1716. By the way, the foundation of another building, believed to pre-date the 1716 one, has been found and will be excavated.

As for the money that has been raised to date, $15,000 has come from an anonymous local donor, $5,000 has come from a Fredericksburg resident, $5,000 from a local group is waiting to match $5,000 from interested parties. The first $1,000 toward that match has come from Moore & Saunders, Attorneys-at-Law.

* * * * * * * * *

Confusion reigns - About five years ago the beginning of our calendar year was changed from January 1st to June 1st. This has caused some confusion all around. If you have not received all of your newsletters we are sorry. **Notice is now given -**

The New Year
Starts June 1st

$10.00 - Family **DUE NOW** $6.00 - Individual

* * * * * * * * *

MAIN STREET PROGRAM - "...A healthy, economically viable downtown is crucial to the economic health and civic pride of the community...." Mirram Rowe, Director Suffolk Main Street Program.

Clubs desiring to learn more about the program through an interesting slide presentation may contact Ms. Rowe at the Downtown Suffolk offices at 539-3592.

* * * * * * * *

Visit Riddick's Folly

Open Tuesday - Friday 10:00 - 5:00 and Sunday 1:00 - 5:00 Available for meetings, parties. Call Becky Ritter, Director at 934-1390 for details. Next Brown Bag Lunch is Wednesday, May 11th. It's free.

* * * * * * * *

A partial list of Historical Society publications follows. Prices listed are as of April 1, 1988.

Suffolk in 1843	$4.00
Storm Over Suffolk	$4.00
Record of the Lower Parish of Nansemond	$5.00
Dairy of Solomon A. Lenfest	$4.00
Pamphlet about the Old City Hall	$ .50
The Law: 200 Years of the People Who Have Influenced Suffolk and Nansemond County	$4.00

Please add $1.00 for postage and handling and make checks payable to Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society.

* * * * * * * *

The following letter written from Suffolk in 1862 is printed with permission of Mrs. Stefan Antis to whose family the letter belongs.

Suffolk March 9th 1862

Dear Mother. Thinking perhaps you were uneasy about me and would like to hear from me and hear how I am. I seat myself to write you a few lines. I am quite well and hope you and all the amily are the same. We started from Camp Grafton on Wednesday last and marched to Kings Mill as I wrote you word and at 8 oclock Friday night we started for Suffolk. We went up James River to Citty Point and took officers from there to Petersburg and from Petersburg on to Suffolk which is a beautiful little citty. We are now very pleasantly situated here and I am well satisfied for I can hear from you just as often as I could when I was on the Peninsula. Suffolk is a flourishing little citty one of the prettiest places I ever sein. We are encamped about a mile from the city. I was fortunate enought not to lose any of my things in the travels if we can

only stay here. I am well satisfied and I think the chance is very good for us to stay. I don't think there is any more prospect of a fight here then there was at Yorktown. I am not more than 160 miles from home and can get home as soon as I could before for I can come all the way by the cars to West Point. You must make yourself anixous about for I recon I am as well of here as anywhere else. When you write to me you must direct your letter just in this way

Sgnt Wm R Otey
Suffolk Va. 53 Regt. Va Val
in care of Colonel Montique

Pamunkey Riffles

We are not any thing like as close to the Yankeys here as we were at Camp Grafton. I understand the Merimac went out the day we got here and gave the Yankeys battle at Newport News it is certainly the fact that she sunk the steamer Cumberland and drove the Congress ashore and blowed up the Magazine in Newport News. The Yankeys used their best 74 Columbids on her but did not give her one single scrach. You must write me word what has been done with James Stewart and how sister is getting on and all when you write. I am in a place where I can get my washing done cheap. I will try and come home as soon as I can. You must write soon as you get this for I might leave this place before long. It won't take a letter long to get here not more than two days for I can get home from here in two days.

You must give my Love to all the children and to all inquiring friends
From your affectionate
Son untill death.
W. R. Otey

When this you see remember me
Though many miles apart we be
WRotey

* * * * * * * *